



ACQUISITION,  
TECHNOLOGY  
AND LOGISTICS

## THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3010 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

FEB 13 2008

### MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN, DEFENSE SCIENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference – Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on  
Integrating Commercial Systems into the DoD: Effectively and Efficiently

The DSB is requested to initiate a study on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of DoD's administration of technical authority. Several programs, including but not limited to, Presidential Helicopter (VH-71), Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH), and Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), have experienced significant cost growth and schedule delays. A major contributing factor in each of these cases was the Government's post-award direction of hardware changes to what had been a Non-Developmental Item (NDI)/Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) acquisition that necessitated qualification reviews and testing to achieve the Service's technical authority or military certification. While it is likely that these changes make the platforms better, these changes also drove dramatic cost growth, delayed delivery, and often reduced quantities. It is essential that this technical authority process be reviewed in detail and recommendations developed to achieve a more pragmatic and resource conscious process. Some of the questions which need to be addressed include:

- How do DoD certification/qualification processes compare to commercial practices?
- Some DoD certification processes have been described as "gold standard." What qualitative benefits have been gained, and are the benefits commensurate with the cost?
- What are the current governance processes for technical authority? What changes and improvements need to be made to achieve better affordability?
- Is it realistic to pursue COTS modification programs for military equipment when the military use is governed under one of these certification processes?
- The P-8M is a militarized version to the Boeing 737. That program has not evidenced the same issues with air worthiness certification as the VH-71 and ARH. Did that program address the air worthiness requirement differently?
- What are the lessons from the application of technical authority to the DoD programs with stated objectives of procuring a commercial standards-based VH-71, ARH, and LCS?

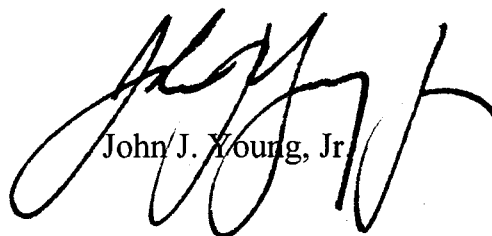


Please undertake this work urgently. This is a major issue confronting the Department of Defense as it seeks to reduce cost and deliver programs on budget and schedule. Please convey the lessons learned in real time to the appropriate DoD program managers and leaders.

The Study will be sponsored by me as the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology.

Dr Jacques Gansler will serve as the Task Force chairman. Mr David Ahern will serve as the Executive Assistant, and Major Chad Lominac will serve as the DSB Military Assistant.

The Task Force will operate in accordance with the provisions of P.L. 92-463, the "Federal Advisory Committee Act," and DoD Directive 5105.4, the "DoD Federal Advisory Committee Management program." It is not anticipated that this Task Force will need to go into any "particular matters" within the meaning of title 18, United States Code, section 208, nor will it cause any member to be placed in the position of action as a procurement official.



John J. Young, Jr.